(a) whether it is a fact that US still imposes dumping duty on shrimps from our country;

(b) whether Government has made a request to US authorities to lift such duties keeping in view the sufferings of our fishermen in the last natural calamities;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) how far has this anti-dumping duty affected exports of shrimps from Orissa during 2004-05; and

(e) what is the action plan of USA to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government had taken up the matter with the United States Department of Commerce (US DoC) and to the United States International Trade Commission (US ITC).

(d) As per the export figures compiled by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), on the basis of shipping bills and invoices, the export of frozen shrimps by the registered exporters in Orissa has been valued at US dollar 51.26 million during 2004-05 as compared to US dollar 47.04 million during 2003-04.

(e) Anti-dumping duty in force at present is subject to annual administrative assessment to be conducted by US Authorities.

Trade with Israel

756. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after withdrawal of Israel's forces from Gaza Strip, there will be congenial atmosphere for trade with Israel;

(b) if so, has government examined the chances of boosting bilateral trade with Israel;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The potential areas of bilateral trade and the ways and means

to promote economic cooperation between India and Israel, have been identified by an inter-ministerial Joint Study Group.

(d) Does not arise.

Implementation of SAFTA

757. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state what steps have so far been taken by india and other South Asian countries towards implementation of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) accord, item-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) Agreement is scheduled to come into force from 1 January, 2006. A Committee of Experts (COE), consisting of delegates from ail Member States, have been negotiating on all outstanding issues pertaining to SAFTA, namely (1) Rules of Origin, (2) Sensitive List (3) Mechanism for Compensation of Revenue Loss for the Least Developed Contracting States (LDCS) (MCRL) and (4) Technical Assistance to LDCS (Technical Assistance). Matter regarding Technical Assistance has been finalized.

The final meeting of COE is going to be held from 29 Novemebr -1 December, 2005 at Kathmandu to finalize the remaining outstanding issues.

Setting up of Inter-state Trade Council

758. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI T.T.VDHINAKARAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has set up an Inter State Trade Council as announced in the Foreign Trade Policy this year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(C) how many meetings of this Council have been held so far;

(d) whether any guidelines have been issued to State Government for Promotion *of* trade; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN):(a) Yes, Sir. The Government has constituted the Inter-State Trade Council (ISTC) on 24th June, 2005.